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As host of a community radio program on the topic of disability, I have had personal experience with many who need this service and what they would need to have in order to make it work well for them.

Issues in STS rulemaking.

1. The limit on calls should be increased. Fifteen minutes is not enough time to work through the process and have good communication at both ends. A MINIMUM of five more minutes is critical. Another 10-20 would be much better.

1a. There is no communication until the operator begins to understand the user. Only then can the actual goal of the service begin.

2. The Mute option should be available for users to avoid distraction.

More users would use the service if they had the option of silencing what is often seen as a humiliation-- the sound of a non-standard voice.

3. A confidentiality announcement is critical so each user is confident that their medical, legal and person information is not at risk.

4. Make the number for the service simple, like the 411 and 911 numbers for other services. This will make it useful for people with cognitive difficulties as well as those with limited dexterity. Make the technology as easy as possible so users can find the human who can help them.

Forcing only STS users to ask for their particular service detracts from the functional equivalency of STS compared with TTY relay.